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# Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: May Report and June Sermons

Herald of Truth

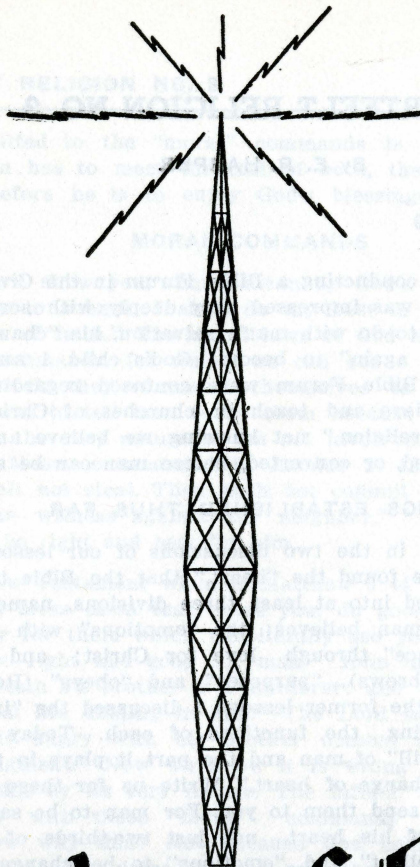
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# Churches of Christ

SALUTE YOU

MAY REPORT  
AND

JUNE SERMONS  
1957





## HEARTFELT RELIGION NO. 3

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 279

June 2, 1957

Last April while conducting a Bible Forum in the Civic Center in Lansing, Michigan, I was impressed very deeply with some questions asked me. These had to do with man's salvation, his "change of heart" and his being "born again" to become God's child. I am sure these good people at this Bible Forum were confused regarding what we are supposed to believe and teach in churches of Christ with reference to "heartfelt religion," not knowing we believe and teach the heart must be changed, or converted, before man can be saved.

### THINGS ESTABLISHED THUS FAR

Friends, thus far in the two discussions of our lesson on "heartfelt religion" we have found the "heart," that the Bible teaches must be changed, is divided into at least three divisions, namely: the "intellect" with which man believes; the "emotions" with which he is brought to "repentance" through love for Christ; and the "will" which "intends" (Hebrews), "purposes" and "obeys" (Romans 6:17) God's commands. In the former lessons I discussed the "intellect" and the "emotions" showing the functions of each. Today I shall discuss with you the "will" of man and the part it plays in the salvation of man or in his "change of heart." Write us for these lessons and we shall be glad to send them to you. For man to be saved it takes a complete change of his heart, not just two-thirds of it. It isn't enough for the "intellect" and "emotions" to be changed. God demands, as we shall find today, that the "whole" of man's heart must be brought into submission; that the will of man must submit to God's orders. God will not tolerate any rebellion to him. His law, his will, his orders are supreme. No man can change them, no man can substitute his way for that of God. No man, no set of men, no church has been given the right to act for God in the changing of one command issued by him. This we must learn. Paul in Hebrews 5:8,9 says "Though he (Christ) were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him."

### POSITIVE AND MORAL COMMANDS

In every age God has made "test" of man's faith. The meaning and purpose of such testing are to determine man's real character, to demonstrate his loyalty. Now there are what we are pleased to call two kinds of commands, namely: "moral" and "positive." If this is not understood man can be easily deceived into thinking that his

having submitted to the "moral" commands is sufficient for salvation. But man has to meet the test of both, the moral and positive commands, before he is to enjoy God's blessings.

### MORAL COMMANDS

I shall now show you what I mean by God's moral commands to which we are to submit. I shall do my best to show you **why** they are **not** "tests of faith." The moral laws of God are those laws, those laws, those commands, for which we can see a reason for doing, a reason by which they commend themselves to us. God does not necessarily have to tell man to do them because man can know this to be best by the very nature of the act involved. For instance, when God through Moses commanded in Exodus 20:13-16 "Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," man could see and know this to be right and best for him.

In the New Testament when in Matthew 5:44 the Lord said "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you," these can easily be seen to be right and good for man. John in I John 3:15 says "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and we know no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." The Lord said in Matthew 5:22 "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment." Now we know it is wrong to hate with anger. We can see this by its very nature. The infidel, the atheist will live in conformity with these "moral" commands the same as the Christian. Now why this? Not because God commanded it, but because he can see the virtue in such and because it is **best** for him and society. He can justify such a standard of living because he can figure out the reason why, can see the benefit from so doing. Now such commands are **not** "tests of faith" for man himself can see the reason for, and the good from this way of life.

### POSITIVE COMMANDS

Now "positive commands" are commands that enter not into the "right" or "wrong" of a thing. They are right because God commanded them and only because of this. Man can figure out no reason for them. In fact, there is no good to derive from the command, either obeyed or disobeyed, so far as the act is concerned. The blessings or the punishments to come either from obeying it or disobeying it are conditioned solely up the pleasure of the one giving the command. The "moral commands" are commanded because **they are right**. The "positive commands" are right **only** because **they are commanded**. The command to do them is the sole basis for their being right. But they become the "test of man's faith" because of this **very nature** of the command. Could man see a reason for it, a reason that would



benefit man, then it would cease to be a "test of his faith" or of his "loyalty" to the giver of the command.

### EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE COMMANDS

That you may see by example what is meant by "positive commands" that "test of man's faith," I invite your attention now to the following illustrations in which we find such. These "positive commands" are usually divided into three kinds: Those in which the command given seems wholly unrelated to the blessing God has promised; or those in which we not only see no connection with the blessing desired, but which are repulsive, maybe, to the intelligence of man because they are considered as Paul declares in I Corinthians 1:25 "foolishness" and for that reason says Paul in verse 23 they become a "stumbling block" in the way of man's acceptance of Christ; and then last those in which we not only can't see any reason for doing them but on the contrary the doing of them would be "morally wrong" but for the fact God commands them to be obeyed.

Now it is the failure to properly understand the importance of and difference in the "moral" and "positive" commands that has caused our trouble in the religious world. Most people fail to recognize these "positive commands" of God as binding and profess their devotion and allegiance to God based solely upon their submission to the "moral commands" and thus the full and complete surrender of the heart is not involved in such conversions. These "positive commands" become the challenge to the "will" of man's "heart" and they "test his faith" as to his character and his complete surrender to God. To obey them regardless of being able to see any reason for so doing becomes the "test" of man's surrender to God. He then does it only because of his loyalty to Christ who gave it. This, God has always demanded. I shall now give you some examples showing how the "will of the heart" must be brought into submission before the heart is completely changed and blessings enjoyed.

### EXAMPLES

In the Old Testament we have an example of the first of these types of "positive commands." In Exodus chapter 12 is the story of the deliverance of the children of Israel under the leadership of Moses. God commanded them in verse 3 to take "them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house" and then in verse 5 he said "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year." He then commanded them in verse 7 to take "the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it" with the promise "when I see the blood, I will pass over you." He was passing through Egypt that night to slay the first born in Egypt but where he saw this blood, on that house he promised to spare them this sorrow. What

connection could anyone see between this act on their part and the passing over their homes that night? They could see no benefit from the act itself. The only merit in such an act of obedience was in the promise made by the giver. This was a "test of their faith in the promise of God." Had they not "believed in him" they would not have submitted to such a command. This command was right only because God commanded it. Here was the test of their character — their faith, and their loyalty to God.

### COMMANDS CONTRARY TO HUMAN JUDGMENT

In 2 Kings, chapter 5 is the story of Naaman, the leper, who was the captain of the Syrian army. In his home lived a little Hebrew girl, captive from the victories in war over the Israelites. She was interested in her captain and said "would to God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." I haven't time to develop this story in its completeness. This was told to Naaman and then to the king of Syria. Naaman finally reached the prophet of God. The prophet did not so much as come out to meet Naaman, but commanded him to "wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." This, as Paul wrote in I Corinthians 1:21-24, was "foolishness" to this captain of Syria and he turned away in a rage. His heart was changed all right, but not in the right way. It was a rebellious heart. He had rebelled against a "positive" command of God and in his rebellion he was going home to die. Many are you, maybe, who have rebelled against certain "positive commands of God" as did this man, thinking them "foolishness." You may be turning from a "positive command" of God, to die in your sins as this man was to die in his flesh. His servant simply said to him, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather thou do what the prophet said and be clean." How well he knew his master. How well he would know us today. The world is ready to do some "great something" that has great pomp and show in religion, but to do the simple things commanded us of God seems foolish to us. It is by these things called "foolishness" in the sight of man that God as "tested our faith." But the captain came to his senses when his servant asked him this question. He knew he was going home to die. He had come there a leper. He was going home a leper. He finally went to Jordan. He washed himself seven times. He came out "clean" with his flesh as that of a child. Now the water did not effect the cure. That came from God, but it came only after the "test of his faith" had been proven by submitting to a command that seemed utterly foolish and in which he could see no earthly connection between it and his cure. We can now begin to see the beauty of my lesson in the "complete change of heart" before the blessings of God are ours to enjoy. It isn't enough for our "intellects" to be caused to "believe." It isn't enough for our "emotions" to be stirred to want the



blessings. Our "wills" must be brought to obey God just as was Naaman's. Unless this is done we may rest assured of this one fact: God will never bestow the blessing. Had Naaman not washed, he would not have been healed. God said, "wash" and be "cleansed." This "positive command," though he could see no connection and though it seemed foolish and repulsive to him, it had to be obeyed, solely because God said — do it! This we must remember.

### THE BLIND MAN

In John, chapter 9 is the story of a man born blind. The Master met him, told him to go "wash in the pool of Siloam" and he would see. There was no connection between the washing in Siloam and receiving his sight. No doctor would order such a thing today. It would seem foolish but Paul said the "foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men." The blind man went and washed and came seeing. Here was a "positive command." It stood between the blind man and his sight. This was a "test of his faith," of his character respecting his willingness to surrender, that he might possess the blessing. Moral commands, those in which you can see a reason, a connection between the thing to be done and the result desired cannot be commands that are "tests of faith" for man then does them, not because God commanded them, but because man himself can see the reason for such. Here is where our world is blinded in this great subject I am discussing today, the "change of heart." The blind man expressed, by his actions, his faith in the promise of Christ by submitting to the "positive command" of the Lord though he could see no earthly reason for it save the Christ who was to bless him, ordered it. THAT is a real "test of man's faith" and God demands just such action before he will bless man.

### COMMANDS UNRELATED AND MORALLY WRONG

In Genesis chapter 22 is an example of a "positive command" that is not only wholly unrelated to the blessing, and objectionable to the "nth" degree, but save for the fact that it was a command of God is morally wrong and sinful. This sounds perplexing and also contradictory to the nature of God that he would command a thing that if itself would be morally wrong. We must remember however that God did not intend for Abraham to complete this act, but here was the "test of all tests" that man's faith might be proven, and remember Abraham is said to be the "father of the faithful," because his faith stood the most severe test of all men tried by the Lord. And the Lord said to him, "Now I know you fear me." Never say you have "Abrahamic faith" until you have surrendered to every command of the Lord no matter how severe. God commanded Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice unto him. Abraham could see no reason for this, no connection between such an act and the receiving of any blessing, yet Paul said of him in Romans 4:20 that he "staggered not

at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving God the glory." Here is "submissive faith." Here is "complete surrender." Here is a "heart converted wholly unto God." It staggered not in unbelief, it gave God the glory. Here it is plain to be seen that the failure of Abraham to obey this command would have been considered an act of "unbelief." To fail to obey God is God's definition of "unbelief." To obey him is his meaning of "faith." This we must learn. Now all these examples given thus far are before the testament under which we live, was given, but the principle of complete surrender and how God "tests our faith" is the same in all ages; God proves our faith by his "positive commands."

In I Corinthians 10:11 Paul says of the things recorded in the Old Testament that they were "written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." What could be their admonition? Just this: God's positive laws are his "tests of our faith" and they "must be obeyed" before he will "bestow upon us the blessings promised of him." This can't be answered; it can't be set aside.

### THE TEST OF OUR FAITH TODAY

Now passing to our dispensation, that of Christ, commonly called the Christian age, we shall endeavor to find God's "positive command" by which the alien sinner's faith is to be tested. God has given it to us just as he did to those of the Old Testament. The world calls it foolish, nonessential, tells men and women they do not have to submit to it and that they may enjoy God's blessings of salvation and remission of sins and refuse to obey it. Now what is this "positive command" God has placed before men as a test of his loyalty, his faith, his complete submission to Christ? Remember the entire heart must be converted, changed in salvation. This churches of Christ believe and teach as no other people known to me.

### BAPTISM A POSITIVE COMMAND

In Matthew 28:18-20 Christ says "All power in heaven and in earth has been given unto me. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In Mark 16:16 Christ says "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." In Acts 2:38 Peter, when asked, What shall we do? replied "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." When Ananias came to Saul of Tarsus he commanded him to "arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord." In Romans 6:3 Paul says "know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" In I Peter 3:21 Peter says "even baptism doth also now save us," and Paul



in I Cor. 12:13 says "for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free."

### SEE NO CONNECTION

Here is a command in which no man can see any connection between the doing of it and the blessings of "salvation, remission of sins, washing away of sins or entering Christ." Yet all these are promised to those who with believing, penitent hearts will obey this "positive command of God" to be baptized. There is no "moral" reason for being baptized. It is neither right nor wrong so far as the act is concerned. Its being right to obey stems solely from the fact God commanded it. Here is God's "test of the sinner's faith" in our dispensation. This challenges the "will of man's heart." The will must now be brought into subjection just as were the "intellect," and the "emotions" of the heart. If man now rebels against this command of God his heart is not right; he is not submissive; he is in rebellion in his heart and cannot possibly have "Bible heartfelt religion." He must not "stagger at the promise of God in unbelief," Man can figure out the why of belief, the reason for repentance; the connection is easily seen by man, but to be baptized in water for the remission of sins man can see no connection between the two and refuses to submit to it "for the remission of his sins." If he does it at all he presumes to tell God that he will not do it for the reason given in the Bible, "that he might be saved," and substitutes his own purpose for being baptized. This also is rebellion against Christ. You can't change the command nor can you change God's purpose for the command without rebelling against God's order. Paul in Romans 6:17 says, "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sins, ye became the servants of righteousness." Yes the "heart to be changed" or "completely converted" must "obey God." This being done then the "intellect" has been brought to believe; the "emotions" have been caused to repent, and your "will" has now been made to completely surrender unto God in obeying that which you see no virtue in doing: that of being "baptized for remission of sins." Just like Naaman had to wash in Jordan and the blind man wash in Siloam and Abraham offer Isaac as a sacrifice, not being able to see any connection between the acts and the blessings, just so man's faith in the promises of Christ causes him to surrender his heart completely unto Christ in obeying this command to be baptized though it seems foolish to some. It is right because God through Christ commanded it. Baptism is the command that "tests the sinner's faith" in Christ, in the command that shows the character of our faith and trust in him, that shows our final and complete surrender unto Christ our Saviour. This being true we must conclude that the "moral" commands are not the "test of our faith" and we are not saved by just doing them. We must conclude therefore that the "positive commands" are the "test of faith" and must be obeyed

else the heart of man remains in rebellion and is not fully converted to Christ. "Heartfelt religion" therefore includes the "whole of the heart" the "intellect" with which man believes, the "emotions" with which he repents, and the "will" with which he obeys even the "positive commands of God." This, and nothing else is the "heartfelt religion" of your Bible. Will you not come today believing in the Lord, repenting of your sins and surrendering your heart unto God's "positive command" to be baptized for the remission of your sins, trust him for his promises as did these of the Old Testament? May God bless you and keep you is my prayer for you this day in the holy name of Christ Jesus our Lord.

### WHY INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

By E. H. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 280

June 9, 1957

The story is told of a train that was passing through a rather severe storm. The people were frightened and fear filled every heart. A little girl was sitting alone, playing with her doll, seemingly unafraid. They asked her, "why are you not afraid of this storm?" She very calmly replied, "Because my daddy is the engineer on this train." She had a reason for her confidence and was able therefore to give then a sensible answer to their question, "Why are you not afraid?"

Now we must have a reason for asking you to "investigate the church of Christ." It must be a valid reason. It must be a different reason. It must be one that justifies our right to live as a separate religious institution. It must be one that makes our existence necessary to the salvation of mankind. If it is not essential and man does not need the church of which I am a member then it only adds to the confused condition that now exists in the religious world. So, believing as we do that the message we have to give to the world is vital to man's salvation, we humbly request that you investigate the church of Christ in your community. We believe it is in reality the church of the first century and that we can show you it is if the Bible and that alone can be accepted as our guide, as our final authority.

Peter in his first epistle, chapter 3 and verse 15 says, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." From this we can easily see that nothing



has a right to exist religiously unless you are able to give a "Bible reason" for its existence. That I shall endeavor to do today.

### NOT A DENOMINATION

The first reason I shall give for investigating the church of Christ is: the church of Christ is not a "denomination" in the sense the world uses that term. The term "denomination" as thought of today simply means "one among many religious groups going to make up the church of the New Testament." It has come to represent "one of many religious bodies equally related to Christ, one as near the truth as the other." Now the church of which I am a member does not share this concept of the New Testament church or body of Christ. We are often spoken of as "one of the Protestant bodies," hence we are classified by the world as a "Protestant religion." Now we are not "Protestant" in the sense the word is used today. We are protestant in that we "protest" all error but not that we protest one particular practice that we feel to be wrong. Neither are we Catholic in the sense in which that is used, yet the church of the New Testament is a "universal institution" in that it is made up of all the saved of the earth. Neither are we "Jewish" as all understand for our religion is not after their customs. Now I have mentioned all these in kindness, with no malice or bitterness, but by way of explaining to you what we are not that you may better understand my lesson today. We claim to be only Christians, the church of the New Testament, teaching and practicing those things taught and practiced by the church during the apostolic age. Paul in Ephesians 1:22,23, speaking of God and his relationship with Christ, said that God "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him (Christ) to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Certainly this was not used in the common parlance of the religious thought of our day for here there was only one church, one body and Christ was its head and this was all over which God had made him head.

### CHRIST HER BUILDER

The second reason for this investigation of the church of Christ is that Christ built it. David in Psalms 127:1 says, "except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." This is a truth we need to ponder well before we make a decision that has to do with the eternal destiny of our souls. To get into a house the Lord did not build means that our labours, our efforts are vain; that is they will not profit us. I must not therefore get into a church or a religious institution the Lord did not build. This is why we believe in thoroughly investigating that which you do religiously. Try what it is, what it does, and how you enter it. Try it by the church of the Bible. The way to do that is to read your Bible and see if it is in harmony

with its teachings. If it isn't it can't be the church the Lord built. In Matthew 15:13 Christ said "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Here he was speaking of the "doctrines and commandments of men," verse 9. This being true we ask you to "investigate the church of Christ" where you are to see if we are that church. In Matthew 16:18 Christ says to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." If we are not that church, then whose are we and who is our builder? If it be not the Lord, said David, we "labour in vain who build" and Christ says we shall "be rooted up." Now this business of religion is of much more serious concern than is commonly regarded by the world. Believing as we do that the church of which we are members is this "house" the Lord built, is this "church Christ built," we humbly invite you to compare it with your Bibles. We beg you to investigate the church of Christ where you are to see if these things I am saying about it today are not true. We believe they are.

### PURCHASED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

The third reason for this investigation is found in Acts 20:28 where Paul says to the elders of Ephesus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God," or as your Revised Version says, "church of the Lord, which he purchased with his own blood." Now here we find the church of Christ was "purchased with the blood of Christ." Hence the church is the only institution ever bought by Christ's blood. This being true the church of Christ is that church that belongs to Christ by virtue of the fact he has bought it by his blood. The church Christ built did not come into existence by accident, nor by some man or group of men deciding to start a religious movement; it came as a deliberate, planned and predestinated purpose of God and Christ his Son, through which and in which to save the world. It is by being a member of this "blood bought church" that man is redeemed by the blood of Christ. Peter in I Peter 1:18, says, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." To whom is he talking here, saying they have been "redeemed — bought back" by the "precious blood of Christ"? It was the "house of God" which Paul calls the "church" in I Timothy 3:15, for Peter says in the second chapter and verse 5, "Ye also, as lively stones, are BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL HOUSE"; a "holy priesthood"; a "chosen generation"; a "holy nation." In chapter 4 and verse 17 Peter further says "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" In chapter 5 and verse 1 and 2 he says "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the



sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed, feed the flock of God which is among you." Here there is no doubt that he is speaking of the church for only the church had "elders." We conclude therefore that the church of Christ in your city is correct when it teaches that all those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ are those who are in the church the Lord built. This being true, you cannot buy the salvation of one soul with your money. Sins cannot be released by payment of gold or silver, says the apostle Peter. Remember it was to him the Lord said, "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," Matthew 16:19. This true, when once you die in your sins all the money in the world cannot release you from them. Peter said you are "redeemed by the precious blood of Christ." A church therefore that is not bought by the blood of Christ cannot be the church the Lord built. We urge you therefore from our hearts that you investigate the truth as presented by the church of Christ in your community. It is different. It adheres strictly to the New Testament, rejecting all things that contradict the revelation of God.

#### NO CREED BUT THE BIBLE

A fourth reason for asking that you "investigate the church of Christ" is, that we have no creed but the Bible. Some may try to make you think otherwise, but no creed has ever been written by a group of men by which congregations of the church of Christ are bound. We follow the instructions as given in Acts 2:42 where it says, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." Again Paul declared in 2 Timothy 3:15,16 that Timothy, from a child, had "known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" and then said "All scripture given by inspiration of God" is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, (that is complete) thoroughly furnished unto all good works." If, therefore, Timothy could be made "wise unto salvation" by the "holy Scriptures"; if they are able to make us "complete" and can "thoroughly furnish us to every good work" we conclude that "creeds of men" are worthless. If the creed contains more than the Bible, it contains too much. If it contains less than the Bible it contains too little. Creeds would divide us into factions for they are written by man and they are documents setting forth man's wisdom and they differ as widely as the thoughts of men differ. God's creed to us the Bible, given to us from heaven, is united in its desires and its demands. Peter in his second epistle, chapter 1 and verse 3 says, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." Since the "divine power" has given us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" then nothing can be added by a latter-day revelation. I press this question, If that divine pow-

er has already given us "all things that pertain unto life," what more do you have to offer? What would a modern-day creed or revelation add unto that which gives us "life"? Yes, the church of Christ in your community stands completely upon the revealed word of God. We reject all creeds, all modern-day revelations, and all traditions of men or churches since none of them can add to that already given. We humbly ask you therefore to "investigate the church of Christ in your community" for you will find a refreshing difference if it is a strict adherence to the word you are looking for. We accept it as our sole guide and final authority in all matters religious.

#### IT IS FOUND IN THE BIBLE

A fifth reason why we ask you to investigate the church of Christ in your community is that we give "Christ the preeminence in all things." In Col. 1:18 Paul says "and he (Christ) is head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." This is the reason why we answer as we do when you ask us, What are you religiously? We reply, We are Christians. This is not to be arrogant. With us it is serious. That is just what we are and nothing else, for there can be nothing better. I realize sometimes our friends become offended by this answer but really there should be no offense in such an answer. Now Paul said Christ should have the "preeminence in all things" and we give him the "preeminence" by wearing his name. We feel to wear any other is exalting some man or some act above that of Christ. For instance, If you were to ask my wife, Who are you? and she should say I am Mrs. Smith, and honor my cousin's name or the name of a friend, every time you asked her who she is, instead of honoring my name, I think you know she would be reflecting upon my name. I would soon become angered over it and would begin to wonder why she gave his name the "preeminence" over mine. Man would not allow it! Well, Paul says Christ demands the same and for that reason he was made "head of the body, the church." As "head of the church" he comes first. His name is above all others so we refuse, absolutely refuse, to exalt any other name above that of Christ, our head.

In Acts 11:26 it says "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." In Acts 26 and verse 28 Paul was persuading King Agrippa to be a Christian for the Bible reads, "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" and Paul replied, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Here Paul acknowledged he was just a "Christian" and that he was persuading men to be just Christians. In I Peter 4:15,16 Peter says, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this



behalf" and your Revised Version says, "in this name." Here Peter commands us to "glorify God" in the name Christian. It was not given by the enemies of the Lord for here Peter is not an enemy, he is an apostle. The Holy Spirit, guiding him to write this, was not an enemy, and he guided Peter to command them to "glorify God" in the name "Christian." I know it can't be wrong. So when you ask what we are and we reply, We are just Christians, do not become impatient with us and think unkindly of us for we are doing what the Bible has commanded. We will not demote the name of Christ; we will not make it second best; we will not place the name of any man, act, or method above our Lord. Is there a name to be worn that excels the name we wear? We shall never be satisfied with second best when we can have the best. In the first century they were called Christians under the direction of the apostles who were inspired of God by the Holy Spirit. They gave Christ the "preeminence." Now choose what you may. Give the "preeminence" to someone else or something else, but as for congregations of the church of Christ we shall do as Paul admonished us, we shall give Christ the "preeminence" in all things.

### THE CHURCH

Now when we are asked, "What church are you a member of?" we meet with the same reaction from our friends. We mean no harm. We do not do this to throw off on someone else. We are members of the church of Christ. That is the only answer we can give. Were we to drop the honor given to Christ and call the church of which we are members by some man's name or just by some human name that has no relation with Christ at all, we would be accepted. Now why drop the name of Christ? Why demote him and honor some man by giving his name to the church just to appease the feelings of some friend? Really friends, I am serious about all this! Paul said "give Christ the preeminence in all things."

Now here is why we honor Christ and not some man or some form of church government, or some method, or the church universal. In Matthew 16:18 Christ said, "I will build my church." It certainly is his. In Acts 20:28 Paul declares that the Lord purchased it with his blood. Now why honor some man by calling it after him, instead of honoring the Christ who built it and whose it is by the right of possession? In Revelation 21:9 John refers to it as the bride. Hear him as he says, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." Since therefore it is his "bride," his "wife," why call her by some other man's name?

When you ask, What church we are members of we could answer "we are members of the body of Christ." Well, this would only confuse the average man today. He would have no earthly idea of what you are a member. In the first century of our New Testament times that was enough, for there was only one church and that was the church of Christ. It was and is today the "body of Christ." In our confused

state today we have to be specific so when you ask us, from that standpoint, we simply tell you we are members of the church of Christ. We could say we are members of the family of God; or of the household of God; the kingdom of Christ, and this should be enough; it would have been in the first century for there was not a single modern denomination back there. When they said then, I am a Christian, or a member of the body of Christ; or I am a member of the house of God, they understood it meant they followed Christ for there were no denominational bodies to confuse the minds of men. If we were all following the revelation of God today, as then, we would not be divided today.

In Romans chapter 16 and verse 16, Paul in referring to the local congregations of the church says, "churches of Christ salute you." Now these were not conflicting denominations for not one is mentioned back there. They were all of the same faith and order. Paul, Peter, John, Luke, Timothy, Silas and all were welcomed in every church and they were all just known as Christians and called churches of Christ. That is what they actually were. Now that is what we are today and that is all we are. We will not set aside the blessed name of Christ and call his church by the name of some man for we respect him above them.

We ask you, therefore, to investigate the church of Christ in your community for it is different. It is following your Bible. We believe the Bible to be God's word and by it we must go and it is our sole authority. But I shall conclude this lesson next time. May the Lord bless you is our prayer in his blessed name. Brethren let me thank you for your fellowship in making these lessons possible. Write us today.

## WHY INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST? No. 2

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 281

June 16, 1957

My friends I assure you it is a pleasure to come into your homes today with another program in the study of God's word. I am continuing today the subject, "Why Investigate the Church of Christ in Your Community"? This lesson is the result of a discussion I heard last April while I was in Michigan. Driving to Toledo from Detroit I chanced to hear a discussion by some leading religious educators on the subject, What Is the Church of Christ? This discussion I am sure covered much of the nation. After having heard it I thought it good to



discuss with you "Reasons Why You Should Investigate the Church of Christ in Your Community." I believe with all my heart we are the church of the first century established by the Lord through his apostles. I fully believe an investigation of those things most certainly believed and taught among us will convince you of the same. In my former lesson I gave five reasons why you should investigate the church of Christ, the reasons being: because the church of which we are members has "Christ as its builder"; it is "not a denomination"; it has no "creed but the Bible"; it has no "head but Christ"; it was "purchased by the blood of Christ"; its members "wear no name but Christ, call the church by no other name than that of its owner and builder—the Christ"—and in so doing we do as commanded by Paul, we give Christ the preeminence in all things, Col. 1:18. Now today I shall continue to give you Bible reason why you should investigate the church of Christ in your community. We hope you will write for these sermons.

Today I begin by giving you the sixth reason for asking you to investigate the church of Christ in your community. We plead for the "unity of all who propose to believe in the Bible." We do not believe the followers of Christ can be divided and be pleasing to the Lord. In fact I personally believe that whoever is to blame or is the cause of such a division will have to answer before the Lord. Paul says in I Cor. 14:33, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." These "churches of the saints" do not refer to conflicting, warring denominations for none were back there, but it refers to the congregations of the church of the Lord as in Jerusalem, Corinth, Antioch, Ephesus and such places. Now in them there was to be peace and if they were divided they should not lay such division on the teachings of the Lord for he is not the author of confusion. Certainly then he is not the author of our modern-day religious confusion. We believe our unity should be an answer to his prayer in John 17:20. Here Christ prayed, "Neither pray I for these alone (that is for his apostles), but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Now we do not believe some 250 to 300 conflicting bodies become the answer to this prayer. He did not pray for division. He prayed for unity; the kind of unity that existed between him and his Father. Our religious world certainly does not picture to us such a spirit of unity as that for which Christ prayed here. This is why you do not hear preachers of the church of Christ praying, thanking God for all the churches in the world, so man may find one which best suits his choice. The Lord's prayer was just the opposite to this. He prayed there be just one, united as the Father and the Son. Now friends, really, way down deep in your real self, are our modern conditions in our religious world, that for which Christ was praying here in John 17:20? The church of Christ in your community

believes in this prayer and the unity for which Christ prayed. We believe division to be wrong and sinful because it contradicts and sets at naught the prayer of our Saviour as he prayed in the very shadow of the cross.

Again in John 10:16 in speaking of the Jew and the Gentile he says, "other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." Here he foretold the bringing in of the Gentiles and thus there would be just one fold and he would be the shepherd over that one fold. That took place in Jerusalem with the Jews on the first Pentecost after Christ arose from the dead, and in Acts 10 with the Gentiles. Hence, over 1900 years ago they became "one flock." From that time on there was to be "one fold." That fold has been composed of both Jews and Gentiles. Prior to this time they were divided into two groups; into two folds. The coming of the kingdom of Christ or church of the Lord was to do away with all divisions and parties and groups and clans, and was to unite all believers in one fold, one body, which is the one church with Christ as the shepherd over it. Our world today does not present such a beautiful spirit of unity as taught here by our Lord. In Acts 2:44 the Bible says "And all that believed were together, and had all things in common." There was no division among God's people here. They were not divided into different communions, each teaching a different doctrine and claiming Christ as the author of his peculiar tenets. They were the answer to the Lord's prayer for unity and under such the church grew.

Paul in I Corinthians 1:10 wrote to the church at Corinth as follows: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Now here had arisen four groups, four divisions. One group was following Paul; another Cephas; another Apollos; and the fourth Christ. Now they were divided over men. These men as well as Christ, all taught the same thing and had they really been followers of them they would not have been divided for Paul writes them this letter reprimanding them for following him. Here was the seed of denominationalism springing up into groups calling themselves after certain men and Paul condemned it in its very beginning. He told them in chapter 3, "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." Hence to be divided is to be "carnal" and this same writer in Romans 8:6 says "to be carnally minded is death." Here is placed the divine condemnation upon division saying it is carnal; it spells spiritual death.

Now, my good friends, the church of Christ in your community believes and teaches that division is contrary to the spirit of Christianity for it violates the Lord's prayer; it contradicts his promise in



John 10:16 that there is to be but "one fold" with "one shepherd"; it sets at naught the admonition of the Spirit as spoken through Paul to the church at Corinth; and it is in direct conflict with the teachings and practices of the early Christians and the church as found in Acts 2:44 where it says they were "all together and had all things in common." Paul declares plainly in I Cor. 14:33 that "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." Now where peace does not reign and where unity is not enjoyed it is not the result of God's system; it is the result of man's errors. This being true the divided condition of the world religiously is not God's plan. He intended for "all churches of the saints" to be at "peace" one with the other. The church of Christ in your community pleads for a return to Paul's admonition for "peace." My seventh reason for "investigating the church of Christ in your community" is, "We propose to speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where it is silent." In I Peter 4:11 the apostle says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Paul to Titus in Titus 2:1 says "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." Again he says in Gal. 1:8 "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." John, in Revelation 22:18,19 says "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Finally Christ says, as recorded in Matthew 15:8,9 "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." Now why, Lord, are their hearts far from you? Listen to his answer in verse 9, "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." The church of Christ in your community opposes all doctrines of men as dangerous to man's soul for they are condemned by Christ and we are warned against all such as being "vain." If you know of one thing we ask people to do that we can't find authority for in the Bible, if you will point it out to us we will at once drop it from our practice. In becoming a Christian we ask you to do nothing but that found commanded and practiced by the apostles of our Lord.

#### IDENTICAL PLANS

My seventh reason therefore for asking that you "investigate the church of Christ in your community" is that we present the identical plan of salvation as that taught and practiced by the early church. If this is true, and it really is, then we have a vital reason, a Scriptural reason for our existence. If we do not present the identical plan of salvation as that presented by the early Christians under the direction of the apostles as they were guided by the Holy Spirit, then we

are not the church Christ established. If we do present that plan and then abide by his instructions to that church, we are beyond all contradiction the church of the New Testament.

#### THE BIBLE PLAN

That you may know we do present the identical plan as that taught by the Lord and his apostles I invite your attention to the words, first, of Moses in Deuteronomy, chapter 18, verses 18-20 where the Lord said to him, concerning Israel, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." That you may know who this prophet is, I read to you from Acts, chapter 3, verses 20 and 26 where he says, "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you" and then verse 26 "Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Now between these two verses he quotes this prophecy of Deuteronomy and applies it to Christ. Christ therefore is this Prophet of whom Moses spake and in whose mouth the Father has placed his words, with the warning that he will "require it of every soul that doth not hearken unto them." By that term "require it" he simply means he will punish every soul that will not obey the words of this Prophet, which Prophet he has sent to "turn every one of you from his iniquities." By these words we are to be "turned away from our iniquities."

#### WHAT THIS PROPHET SPAKE

Now the words spoken by this Prophet became the words of life; the words of salvation; the words by which they were to be "turned away from their iniquities." If the church of Christ in your community does not bring these words then do not have anything to do with them for it is these words and these only that will bring you to salvation. I assure you, however, the church of Christ in your city will bring you these words. In Matthew 28:18-20 this Prophet says "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit): teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Then in Mark 16:16 Christ this Prophet says "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." He did not say "he that believeth only" shall be saved but "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Then Luke records the words of this prophet as follows in Luke 24:46 "Thus it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his



name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." In Matthew 10:32 this same prophet declared "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

It must be remembered that these words were put in the mouth of Christ by the Father, says Moses in Deuteronomy and also Peter in Acts chapter 3. It will also be remembered that God said "I will require it of every soul that does not hearken unto my words spoken by this prophet." Now this prophet has unquestionably commanded men to preach the gospel; for those to whom it was preached to "believe this gospel"; for them to "repent" of their sins; for them to "confess Christ" before men; and twice in the Great Commission this prophet sent of God to turn away the people from their iniquities, commanded the people in every nation to be "baptized" with the promise he would save them and that he would only be with those who taught the people to be baptized in his name. Summing up the Lord's warnings against those who will not "hearken," that is, obey these words, and to those also who will not teach people to obey these words given by this prophet are these: In Deuteronomy he says of those who will not "hearken — obey them" "I will require it of him"; in Acts 3:23 Peter says, quoting this same prophecy from Deuteronomy, "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people"; in Mark 16:16 Christ said to those who would not believe him, they "shall be damned." Now to "hear him"; to "hearken to his words" and to "believe him" all mean the same thing; it means to "obey what he says." To fail to obey them is to be lost. Now to those who will not teach the people to obey the words of this prophet Moses says this of them in Deuteronomy 18:20 "But the prophet (or teacher) which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die." Then in verse 21 the question is asked, "If thou say in thine heart, How shall I know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." Ladies and gentlemen, to undertake to change or add to the words of this prophet brings upon man the wrath and condemnation of God. Once the world believes this and begins to "investigate the modern-day prophets" we shall see if they are false, for the things they speak God has not commanded nor do their prophecies come to pass.

Now the church of Christ in your community will teach you to do exactly what Christ, this Prophet, commanded that the people be taught. Like the Lord commanded, we teach you to believe in your Lord, to repent of your sins, to confess him before men, and to be bap-

tized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" that you may be saved, have remission of sins as the Lord promised in Luke 24:47 and Mark 16:16. So far as I know we stand alone as a unique group in refusing to compromise the words of our Master as given by him in the Great Commission, and standing eternally upon the words of this prophet as being positively essential, neither adding anything to his plan, either before or after becoming a Christian. The Bible is our only guide. We believe in abiding by it and what it does not permit to leave undone. For twelve years, from Little Rock, Arkansas, on our radio program, our slogan was "Back to the Bible in All Things." That is the purpose of this broadcast. We are calling men and women "back to the Bible"; "back to God's word"; "back to the words of this Prophet." This can't be wrong. Yes, we beg of you to "investigate the church of Christ in your community." If there be not one, write to us and we shall be glad to help you. Write us for these lessons on "Why Investigate the Church of Christ?" Study them with an open Bible. Brethren, these great Bible truths should be on every radio; on every television station; in every newspaper; and shouted from every nook and corner of this old earth where men and women are accountable unto God. Let me, on behalf of the Highland Church of Christ, thank you for your fellowship in helping make this great work possible. Without you it could not be done. May we soon be able to enjoy the entire network over which to declare these words of this Prophet of God. Will you, who are listening today, not obey the words of this Prophet by believing in him, repenting of our sins, confessing his blessed name, and being baptized as commanded by him? May God bless you and keep you is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ this Prophet of God.

## WHY INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST? No. 3

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 282

June 23, 1957

Last April, during my meeting with the good church in West Memphis, Arkansas, assisting the church there in an evangelistic campaign, a lady said to me, "Brother Harper, you do not know it but you are the cause of my being a member of the church." I replied, "No I did not know that." Then I asked her how it came about. She said, "I used to hear you over the radio from Little Rock, Arkansas, while you preached for the church there." It has been about 23 years ago now since I started that program and over 11 years ago since I left it but such is the story everywhere I go in that section. You who have been



on the radio have had many such wonderful and thrilling experiences. Everywhere we go we find such people, whom we never knew about who tell us, "We first learned the truth by means of this broadcast." It will take the judgment to reveal the good that has been made possible by your cooperation with us in this great work. Had it not been for our friends and many churches of Christ, cooperating with Highland, this work could never have been accomplished. We want you to know that from our hearts we appreciate it and are made humble before God and before you, for this confidence you have had and still have in us.

#### PREVIOUS REASONS GIVEN

In the two preceding lessons I have pointed out that you should investigate the church of Christ in your community because, (1) Christ is its builder, (2) It wears no name but Christ, exalting him and giving him the preeminence in all things, (3) It is not a denomination, but the body of Christ only, (4) It was purchased by the blood of Christ, (5) It has no creed but the Bible, (6) It speaks where the Bible speaks and is silent where the Bible is silent, (7) It pleads for unity of all in the one body of Christ and therefore its call is for the world to "come back to the Bible" for our final authority in all things pertaining to our salvation and to the work of the church of the Lord and many other vital things.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

Today I shall discuss with you the eighth reason for investigating the church of Christ in your community. That reason is that it has only the organization authorized in the Bible by the revelation of the Spirit. I'll do my best to show you today that the church of Christ is the church of the New Testament as to her organization. We have reproduced in our generation and the generations preceding us the New Testament pattern of church organization, of church government. We have absolutely no "conventions," no "conferences," no "synods," no "presbyteries," no "cardinals," no "bishops" other than elders over local congregations, no "human societies," with "corporate bodies," controlling the operation of the church. But God's order of things will always work if given a chance. So today let me show you by the Bible what the organization of the church of your Bible is. Now think this over seriously: If the Lord has an organization or a systematic order by which his body, as an "organism," is to function then to have some other order or organization would cause it to cease to be the church the Lord built, and would become the church of some man or some set of men. For it to be the church the Lord built it must not be changed by man. Any right to change his church in any particular must come from him direct. No man nor set of men dares sit in legislative, judicial, or executive power over the Lord's church and presume to alter

God's order of things. This would be taking unto ourselves the prerogative that belongs only to the Lord. This would be to us a "presumptive sin." It presumes to know more of how and what his church should be than did the Lord who built it, so we of the church of Christ in your community are content to leave it just as the Lord set it up and feel that he knew what was best. We then try to function in the "framework" of God's order of things. He made no mistake. We might. Given a chance to function as the Lord arranged it, the church of the Lord can take the world for Christ and would unite all honest seekers of truth in one body, the church, as the Lord prayed might be done in John 17:21. This can't be wrong.

#### CHRIST THE HEAD

Another vital point for your consideration today is the fact that we have no "head" but Christ. No man sits over us today as the "vicar" of Christ. We have absolutely no "earthly head" to direct the affairs of the church. Now the reason we do not have is because in Eph. 1:20-23 Paul says God "set him (Christ) at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the HEAD over ALL things to the CHURCH, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Also, in Colossians 1:18 this apostle says "And he is the HEAD of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in ALL things he might have the preeminence." Now the head is to direct the affairs of the body, is to issue the orders and no man or set of men has the right to countermand those orders. Not until he relinquishes his right as head, and God the Father invests this power in some other man or men or institution, can the church of the New Testament have any other head or governing body. When Christ said to Peter in Matthew 16:19 "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" he did not give to him nor to the rest of the apostles the power to change or alter, in the least, one of his commands. The things they were to bind were only those things revealed to them by the Spirit. Christ said to them in Luke 24:48,49 "Ye are my witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." In John 14:25,26 Christ says to these same apostles, "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost (that is the Holy Spirit), whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Again in John 16:12-14 Christ further says to them, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall



not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Here we find that even the apostles, Peter included, dare not bind on men anything not revealed to them by the Spirit sent from the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter says in I Peter 4:11 "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Christ is the "head." You dare not set aside his "oracles" and substitute your own. This is fundamental. It is imperative that we learn this vital truth. Jude says in verse 3, "it is needful for me to write you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once (and for all, says the Revised Version) delivered unto the saints."

This has the force of forbidding all further revelations to the saints for it says "once and for all delivered." That simply means it is the last. It was this "faith" so delivered that was bound by the Lord in heaven. Neither Peter nor Jude nor any of the apostles or inspired writers could add to it nor could they change it. If they could not then I know we can't today. One must know, therefore, that the church to which he is united is the church that adheres strictly to the "faith once delivered to the saints." No earthly head, no council, no conference, no convention, dare lay their hands on this "faith once delivered to the saints" to alter it. When altered it ceases to be that "faith" and becomes the product of those making the changes. This we must learn before it is too late. The apostle John in John 12:48 records these words of Christ, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." The church of which we are members must have this "word" or we shall come to the judgment, wanting. In Matthew 28:18 Christ, after his resurrection says, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Not the least of this power has even been transferred by him to any earthly head or council with power to change, alter, or add to the things he has given us as the head of his church. It is Christ that is "king of kings and Lord of Lords" (I Timothy 6:15 and Revelation 17:14). He is the sole ruler. There was never given to any man on this earth power to become the "earthly king of kings, and Lord of Lords" over the kingdom or church of the Lord. He alone is both "head" and "king." He has never resigned.

#### KIND OF GOVERNMENT

In the Bible account of Christ's government we find that it is not an "episcopacy"; it is not a "democracy," nor is it an "oligarchy." It is a "monarchy" with Christ as the absolute monarch and head. He alone makes the laws that govern the church of Christ in your community. In James 4:12 James says, "there is one lawgiver, who is able to save and destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" This law is called the "law of Christ," Gal. 6:2. Now Paul, the specially chosen apostle to

the Gentiles, says in II Tim. 4:1-4 "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Paul saw the day coming when men would turn from the Lord's revealed will and would substitute their fables, their own systems for those of the Lord's. This he condemns.

#### WHY BE CERTAIN?

The reason I am pleading with you to investigate what you are religiously and to investigate the church of Christ in your community is because Paul says in II Thess. 2:3-5, speaking of the second coming of Christ: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God, (now listen to this carefully) so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" I know he is not sounding out his warnings against the church of Christ in your community for we have no such head over us calling himself God, nor claiming to sit in the place of God to be worshiped as God by us, his humble subjects. God called such a man "this man of sin." From these it seems to us that it is easily seen that there is no "head" but Christ, no "king but Christ," and that no man has been authorized to sit as God in the temple of the Lord having men to bow down to him rather than to him who is "king of kings and Lord of Lords," the Christ our blessed Saviour. Hence, his government is an absolute "monarchy," with Christ the sole ruler and lawgiver, with warnings to any and all who would dare change the laws or the orders of him who has given the laws and who has issued the orders for the carrying out of his decrees.

#### HOW HIS CHURCH FUNCTIONS

The "head" of the church of Christ has elected to organize his people into groups, known as local congregations, with elders over them to guide his affairs. The church of Christ has no universal, earthly, human organization through which to operate or to function. No such organization was ever set forth by our head; no instructions are given for any such organization, hence, the church of Christ in your community is not directed by some super, universal head or ecclesiastical supreme court or society of any kind. It is strictly local in its organizational functions. In the first century of our New Testament times local congregations had "elders" to oversee them. There was a plurality of them in each church. In Acts 14:23 we read "And when they (Paul and Barnabas) had ordained elders in every church, and had prayed with



fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." Every church had not one, but a plurality of elders. These elders were also known as "overseers." In Acts 20:28 Paul, in giving his famous lecture to the elders at Ephesus, says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The marginal reading of your Bible says "bishops." This word for "overseer" is the word for "bishop." But Paul applied this term to the "elders at Ephesus," Acts 20:17. We therefore are forced to conclude that the "bishops" in the church the Lord built were the "elders" in that church and they had to have a "plurality" in every church. They could not have just one elder or bishop over the congregation nor could he be over a number of congregations. In Phil. 1:1 Paul says, "Paul and Timotheus, the servant of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons; Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Here we find three things: The "elders," the "deacons" and the "congregation of saints."

In Titus 1:5-9 Paul says "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." In this chapter, as in I Timothy chapter 3 Paul gives the qualifications of these elders and bishops. Among those qualifications he says they "must be the husband of one wife." Single men could not qualify for elders, bishops, or pastors in the church of the first century. They had to be married men. Elders, bishops, and pastors were the same office of men.

#### DEACONS

Now in the organization of the Lord's church there were special servants called "deacons." Paul gives instructions concerning their qualifications in I Tim. 3:8-13. After having given Timothy orders as to the organization of his body, in I Timothy chapter 3, he says, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God which is the church of the living God . . . the pillar and ground of the truth." The word or expression "behave thyself in the house of God" is most vitally significant here. It does not refer to our personal conduct but to the orderly carrying out of the work of the Lord in his church. Christ gave this order of affairs in the organizational arrangement of his church and in no place is there a reference to any other kind of church organization. There is no "universal organization" set up by the Lord, to be on this earth, to which all local congregations and preachers have to bow. Each congregation is "autonomous" in its carrying out of the work of the Lord. By "autonomous" I mean it has the right of "self-government." Each local congregation is independent of all others, yet all are a part of the church

over which Christ sits as head and each receives its orders from him. This being true all local congregations of the Lord's body, his church, have to preach and practice the same things; have to have the same church government. There can be no vital difference in their procedure for all get their orders from the same source and that is from the revelation of God's Spirit to his "apostles and prophets" of the first century, Eph. 3:5.

#### OTHER WORKERS

Now the government of the Lord's church is as follows: Christ the head; elders to rule or direct the local congregations, Heb. 13:7, Acts 20:28; deacons to act as special servants; and then the congregation of the local church over which the elders watch. It is from the congregation, now, that we select our teachers, our evangelists, and all our workers. These are all under the supervision and direction of the elders or bishops of the church; the bishops being the same as the elders. Your Bible knows no other system of church organization or government for the church of the Lord. It is under such arrangement that this program, Herald of Truth, is directed by the Highland Church of Christ. Our elders have absolute supervision of it. No universal, corporate legislative body sits in judgment over us. Sister congregations and individuals assist us or it could not be possible for us to carry on this great work. What might have been done through some society that would have control of this phase of the work of the church has been done by the simple, orderly arrangement of Christ's governmental system. I mention this to point out to you the fact that the arrangement left by Christ to govern his body, his church, can function and that beautifully if given a chance.

#### CONCLUSION

We therefore invite you to investigate the church of Christ in your community for you will find it with the kind of governmental arrangement, as described in your Bible and as given by the Lord. We do not vary from your Bible in our affairs in the church. The Bible is our sole guide. It is our final authority. By it we propose to go, by it to be directed. No creeds, no councils, no synods, no conferences, no bishops, no societies, no human earthly head can or does sit in judgment to direct our affairs. It is done by the elders of the local congregation. No other form of government can be found in your Bible. If the Bible be God's word then let us respect him by being willing to be governed by it and cease to substitute for his divine plan our own human arrangement.

#### HOW TO BECOME MEMBERS

You become members of this divine institution by believing in Christ, John 3:16; by repenting of your sins, Acts 17:30; confessing your faith in Christ, Acts 8:37; and being baptized in his name for



the remission of sins, Acts 2:38. Those who were baptized for the remission of sins in Acts 2:38 the Lord added to his church, Acts 2:47. If you will do what they did he will add you to the same church. If not, why not? We therefore humbly submit to you these lessons on: Why Investigate the Church of Christ in Your Community, with the prayer that you will do just that. When you do you will find we are the New Testament church reproduced on earth for you today. May God bless you and keep you is our prayer in his holy name.

## DECIDING FOR CHRIST

E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 283

June 30, 1957

My friends, as I come to the close of my present series of sermons, let me thank the many who have written us that you have enjoyed our lessons; also those who have written expressing a difference of conviction regarding the lessons I have delivered. Some of you have written me very nice letters endeavoring to show me where I am wrong. Now I want you to know I appreciated this effort on your part, especially when they were written as kindly as some of you have written to me. I pray that you will continue to study these great and vital issues and that one day you may see where I have presented the truth on such subjects as "The New Birth"; "How We Get into Christ" where all spiritual blessings are to be enjoyed; "Heart-Felt Religion"; and "Why Investigate the Church of Christ" in your community. I have tried to deliver them in kindness, yet with conviction, that you may know I believe them to be the truth with all my heart. Write us for these and other lessons and as long as they last we shall be only too happy to mail them to you.

### DECISION FOR CHRIST

Now today for my closing lesson I have selected to discuss with you the subject just announced, "Decisions for Christ." Today this term has become a very popular one. We hear on every side the expression, I have made a "Decision for Christ." Over our radios, televisions, in the papers, from pulpits we hear it announced, "So many made decision for Christ last night," or maybe it is announced "two hundred or maybe five hundred called in by phone and told of their having made DECISIONS FOR CHRIST." These are all reported then as having been saved, or born again, hence so many hundreds or thousands are reported saved in this or that effort. Now this lesson is not intended as a severe criticism nor is it to be taken as an unkind rebuke to people who are trying to be saved, or who may think they

have made "Decisions for Christ." I only wish to discuss what I, from my heart, believe is necessary to constitute an acceptable decision for Christ. I fear that many who think they have made a "Decision for Christ" have failed to understand what a "Decision for Christ" really implies; what it really means. I am sure it means more than just deciding you will cease doing wrong and that you will receive Christ as your Saviour. Now it includes this certainly but my good people you can't make a complete "Bible Decision for Christ" just sitting at your radio or your television. You can make up your mind and come to the decision that you will do everything necessary to "Accept Christ" but it takes more than that for Christ to "Accept you." Until Christ has "Decided for You" you have not made a "Bible Decision for Christ." It is not a "one way affair." Christ has a say in this matter and it is here, so many times, that failure comes. Man is not willing to do what Christ has demanded in making that "Decision for Christ" but in turn man demands of Christ that Christ save him upon his, man's terms. When Christ, who is the Saviour, lays down the terms upon which he will accept man, and man refuses to submit to Christ's commands, it is then that man has rebelled against Christ, rather than having "Decided for Christ" and is now demanding that Christ "Decide to save man on man's terms." So our question today is, Have we really decided for Christ? Or has that which we thought to be a "Decision for Christ" been in fact a rejecting of the Christ?"

### MUST OBEY CHRIST

There are two classes of people: One class that "obeys the Lord" or "does what he commands"; the other that will "not obey him," or "that does not do his will." Now the question I want you to answer is: Which of these two has "decided for Christ"? The one that "obeyed him" or the one that "would not obey him"? This is fundamental. There is absolutely no "Decision for Christ" until man has "obeyed Christ." You may think you have "decided for him." You may be honest in believing you have and yet it is possible to be deceived. Saul of Tarsus, Acts 9, was honest but deceived; Cornelius, Acts 10, was honest but unsaved; the people in Acts 19:1-10 were honest, but deceived; Lydia and those with her, Acts 16, were honest but lost. They were all devoutly honest, but wrong. The multitude on Pentecost, was honest, devoutly religious, but deceived. All of them believed they had made "Decisions for God" and that they were saved and in covenant relationship with God but they were lost. They had to do something more. What they had to do we have to do. In Matt. 7:21 Christ said "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." In Heb. 5:8,9 the writer says "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." In II Thess. 1:7,8 Paul says the Lord "shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty



angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now any decision that is a "decision for Christ" has to include "doing the will of the Father"; and "obeying the gospel of our Lord." Anything short of this is not a surrender but a rejection. In Luke 6:46 Christ asks "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" I may declare my decision for Christ, but unless I am willing to obey him I come under the condemnation of those just mentioned in Luke 6:46. Empty is that confession of Christ that refuses to "do the things he commands." A complete decision must include obeying the gospel of Christ.

#### REBELLION—IS DISOBEDIENCE

In II Samuel 15:22,23 Samuel said to Saul, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." God had told King Saul to destroy the Amalekites and all they had. Saul did not misunderstand the command of God. He went forth to battle. He won the victory over the enemy but he failed to obey the voice of God. He did not kill them all. He saved the king and the fat of the cattle. Samuel said that by so doing he "rejected the word of the Lord," and had "rebelled" against the Lord. Here the prophet announces the principle that has always, without exception, been demanded by the Lord: That man "obey his voice" and when he does not, no matter how loud he may proclaim his faith in God, his "submission to the Lord," the Lord rejects him and counts it a rebellious act. I may tell the world I have made a "decision for Christ" and then refuse to "obey his voice," refuse to do what Christ has commanded me to do to be saved, and all my crying about "decisions for Christ" will come up to the ears of the Lord as did the pleadings of King Saul who said "Blessed be the name of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord." Yes, the king praised the name of the Lord; he said "I have performed the commandment of the Lord" but he was condemned because he had not gone all the way in that obedience. Your "Decision for Christ," my friends, will have to take you "all the way with him and his voice." That decision completed will demand of you and me a complete surrender to the Master's will and that "will" includes in it more than "faith only." That faith must be an "obeying faith" (Romans 1:5; Romans 16:26). It has never been otherwise in any of God's dealings with man.

#### THOSE WHO DECIDED FOR CHRIST

In Joel 3:13, after having pictured to them the sins of the people and having commanded them to assemble in the "valley of Jehoshaphat"

where he would "sit to judge all the heathen round about," God says "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision." Were the prophet writing in our day he would cry even louder because of the condition of our nation. God is denied, Christ dethroned, the Holy Spirit declared but a myth, the Bible made fun of, the church pictured as a nonessential institution though it cost the life and blood of Christ, commands of God are declared nonessential to our salvation, and the Great Commission of our Lord given in Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16 has long since been abandoned and the world is being told they can make "Decisions for Christ" and never obey his orders set forth in these passages that are "world-wide" in their scope and "personal" in their application. Christ said "go . . . preach the gospel to every creature." He declared "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Yet the multitudes, as in Joel's day, are sitting in the "valley of decision" not knowing what it is to "decide for Christ" nor do they know "when" they have "decided for him." Yes the hour of decision is here; the "day of the Lord for our decision" has come. It came on that Pentecost day in Jerusalem, nearly two thousand years ago just after the resurrection of our Lord from the dead. That "hour for decision" shall continue to last until the end of time. Multitudes now sit in that valley, confused, disheartened, and bewildered, not knowing which way to turn. Why this? Because there are hundreds of conflicting voices crying, "This is the way"; "Here is the way"; "Come follow us." Among them are educated men, honest people seeking the true way of "deciding for Christ." The result of all this? Millions never darken the doors of any church building; half the population of our nation profess no religious faith; and infidelity and crime are on the march as never before in the history of our nation. Consider the crime wave, not only among adults but among the "teenage groups." Sixty million adults drink intoxicating liquors; millions become problem drinkers; fifteen to twenty billions of dollars are spent each year on drinking, gambling, and law enforcement. Our jails are filled with our own boys and girls. The prison camps overflow. Why all this? Our divided condition in the religious world is one contributing factor to it, if our Lord knew the answer. He prayed in John 17:21 that we "all be one." Why this prayer? Hear your Lord give the answer and then see the reason for all this confusion in our world. He said "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me." He knew that divided as the world is today, men and women, boys and girls would become confused and refuse to believe that Christ came from God. That is exactly what has happened. Some listening to me right now are saying, "Brother Harper, just as smart men as you and smarter deny what you are preaching. If you men can't agree how we 'decide for Christ,' how can you expect us to understand how to make this 'decision for Christ'?" I am not angry



with you about this. My heart goes out to you for I know you are confused. Churches of Christ in your community are begging the world to "return to the Bible" and find where men and women in the days of the apostles made "decisions for Christ" and do what they did and it cannot fail to be the right "decision." Remember that a "decision for Christ" must include a complete surrender to him and his commands, his instructions. This has to be true. To rebel against his orders, no matter how fervently you may cry your decision for Christ, is but an empty cry and like King Saul, if it does not include "obeying the voice of the Lord" it is as rebellion and remember that the prophet said "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." "Decisions for Christ" must include obedience to his commands.

### DECISIONS FOR CHRIST

In Acts, chapter two, we have the record of a great revival meeting with people gathered from every nation under heaven. A great company of workers were present. Twelve inspired preachers were sent there by the Lord himself. The Holy Spirit was there, working and speaking to these people through these men. They spake as the Spirit gave them utterance. It was impossible for a mistake to be made for the Spirit was guiding them. Thousands were present as they are in many campaigns in our generation. The preachers in this great campaign were the apostles of our Lord, among whom was the apostle Peter. These preachers told this audience, who had, just a few days prior to this occasion, cried for the blood of Christ, that they with wicked hands had crucified the Lord, that God had raised him from the dead, that he was then, at that time raised to sit upon the throne of David and had been exalted then at the right hand of God. He then declared unto them that God had made this same Jesus whom they had crucified both Lord and Christ. Having now heard this, believing it to be true, they stand in the "valley of decision." They must either decide for Christ or against him. Which shall it be? Now is their "hour of decision." They were "pricked in their hearts," that is, convicted of their sins. They now believe that Christ is everything that was ever claimed for him, yet believing this they were not saved. Realizing that "faith only" would not suffice they ask the apostles, "men and brethren, what shall we do?" The hour to make up their minds has come. The time for them to make a decision for Christ is here. They, from their convicted hearts, beg to know what to do. Peter said to them, "repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Here is the test of their "absolute surrender." Here is the test of their "decision for Christ." They now believe in Christ as God's Son, the Saviour of mankind. They are cut to their hearts over their condition. They must now "decide" if they will do what Peter commanded them to do. Their "decision for Christ" here will have to include "baptism for the remission of their sins." What

will they do? They made the decision just as you will have to do if your "decision for Christ" brings to you the remission of your sins. In Acts 2: 41 the record says, "They that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Yes, they made the "decision for Christ"; they "gladly submitted to his orders," 3,000 of them were baptized!

Here, three thousand people who less than two months prior to this occasion had denied, rejected, and condemned to death the Lord, have now made "decisions for Christ" and that gladly. My friends, when you made what you called your "decision for Christ" did it include what theirs did? If not can't you see your decision is not complete for the one they made is the right one. Question: Had this three thousand refused to do what Peter commanded, would they have gone down as "decisions for Christ"? Would they have been said to be saved in verse 47? Would they have been called believers in verse 44? Of course not!

### STRANGE THIS!

Friends, here is a rather strange thing to me. In this great campaign of Acts 2 the preacher upon this occasion told those who were seeking to know what they must do, to "repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." My question now is this: Why is it that this same command, if given today in our great revival campaigns, would kill them cold in their tracks? Why is it that people will not give their time and their money to the support of preachers who tell the people just what Peter told his great revival audience of many thousands? What is the difference in then and now? Have we a different gospel today? Have we a different Saviour today? Have the words of the apostles ceased to be binding today? Churches of Christ in your community preach this same sermon. Those who in our revival campaigns make "decisions for Christ" as their "personal Saviour" are taught to do exactly what these were taught to do on Pentecost. Acts chapter two is the proper way to "make decisions for Christ." Any decision that rebels against doing what these did is not a "decision" really, but is "rebellion." Remember Samuel said "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Here 3,000 precious souls "surrendered to Christ" and were saved, had remission of sins, were called believers, and the Lord added them to his church. Acts 2:38,41,44 and 47. These decisions were genuine! But they were baptized for remission of sins, "every one of them." Were you? If not, why not?

### SAUL OF TARSUS DECIDED FOR CHRIST

Another genuine "decision for Christ" is that of Saul of Tarsus, the record of which is found in Acts chapters 9 and 22. Here was a man who "persecuted Christ (Acts 9:4), a man who persecuted the church even "unto strange cities" and caused them to "blaspheme," Acts 26:11.



The Lord appeared to him and when Saul asked "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" the Lord only told him to go to the city and there it would be told him what "he must do." He goes to the city. Christ sends Ananias to tell him "what he must do." When the man of God came the only thing he told Saul to do was to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." The time of Paul's complete "decision for Christ" has now come. He now knows what he has further to do to have his sins washed away by the "blood of Christ." Will he surrender to the will of Christ and be baptized to have his sins washed away or will he refuse and by so doing reject the Lord? The "Hour of his Decision" was there. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice." To fully and completely "decide for Christ" he must do what Christ has commanded him to do. He arose and was baptized as commanded. Suppose he had refused to do what the man of God, sent by the Lord himself, commanded him? Would he have surrendered to Christ or would he have rebelled against the Christ? Saul's complete "decision for Christ" demanded baptism that his sins might be washed away (Acts 22:16). This is what your Bible actually says, friends. It has to be right. What is wrong with a revival campaign that would be destroyed if the preacher gave this command to them? What about the "decisions for Christ" that refuse to be baptized that their sins may be washed away as did Saul? What is wrong with the Bible answers to these great questions? In your decision for Christ, were you baptized that your sins might be washed away as was Saul? Did he surrender? Hear him in Philippians 3:7,8 where he says, "But what things were gain to me, those things I counted loss for Christ." He further says and "I do count them as refuse that I might win Christ." Yes, this is a Bible "Decision for Christ." Time forbids that I take you to Corinth, to Ephesus, to Philippi, where Paul conducted his great "revival campaigns" and where thousands of "decisions for Christ" were made, but let me ask that you read Acts 16-18 and 19 and find what these did who decided for Christ. They did not just sign a card that "I am saved." Every one of them was "baptized" and not one is on record as having been saved or having made a "Decision for Christ" unless he was baptized. Paul said of those in Corinth, in I Cor. 12:13, "we are all baptized into one body." Paul said to those at Rome, "we are buried with him by baptism" Rom. 6:4. My friends, a complete "decision for Christ" includes believing in him with all your heart, Acts 8:37; repenting of all your sins, Acts 17:30; confessing Christ before men, Matt. 10:32; and being baptized in the name of our Lord for the remission of your sins, Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; and that by a burial and a resurrection, Col. 2:12; as did these in Jerusalem, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Rome and Saul of Tarsus. Will you not come now with a complete surrender, making a full and complete "decision for Christ" as did all these in your Bible? It can't be wrong for it is what they did. May the good Lord bless you to

know Christ in a complete "decision for him," and may he keep you, is my prayer for you in his name.

Again let me thank you for listening; for writing; and for your fellowship in this great work. Brethren, these vital truths should be on every radio network, and on every television station in the world. Remember, the prophet says we are the "watchmen on the wall" and he will require their blood at our hands. He has commanded us to send the gospel to "every creature" in "all the world," Mark 16:15. Be sure to listen to Brother Willeford for our next broadcast.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

MAY, 1957

Receipts .....	\$17,647.63
Expenditures .....	\$18,135.25
Expenditures Exceed Receipts by .....	\$ 487.62

This abbreviated financial statement is being made in order to have the report printed without delay. Any information other than these figures will be given gladly on request and up-to-date statements will be printed at regular intervals.



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